



PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT

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May 17th, 2023

To: Economic and Community Development Commission

From: Planning & Development Staff

Memo RE: Architectural & Engineering Analysis Program

Planning & Development Staff are proposing the attached Architectural & Engineering Analysis Program to be reviewed and approved by ECDC. This program has made a few changes for clarity and outlined new compensation totals. Each of those changes are identified in the attached red-lined version of the guidelines, however we have provided more commentary below:

The Architectural & Engineering Analysis Program began in 1982 as a component of the Commercial Revitalization Program aimed at the Central Business District within La Crosse. The program provides comprehensive building improvement recommendations to businesses to serve as a first step in maximizing the profit of a building. Since it began in 1982, over 120 buildings have utilized this program.

The updating process for this program included feedback from the Delta 3 architecture firm, the Wisconsin Historical Society, and Zettler Design Studios LLC along with a deep dive into historical city records on the program. The unique nature of this program compared to other municipalities or private programs required that the key changes made to the program were recommended by City Staff following feedback from experts in the field.

We are recommending that the program increase the total fixed fee for compensation costs and increase the percentage of costs that property owners pay to participate. The fixed fee was increased by a flat rate of \$1,000 from the old fee, but the increase of owner buy-in from 20% to 25% lessens the burden of the change on the City. The last time that this program increased the fixed fee was in 2016 when there was a \$500 increase from 2010. Before that update, there was a \$1,000 increase in 2010 from the compensation amounts used in 2007. The proposed increase in the fixed fee intends to align with previous changes to the program while increasing owner buy-in to their project.

Following recommendations from architects in the field, the timetable for the project was extended to 3 months to better reflect the time it takes to complete the reports outlined in the program. In addition, the compensation amounts note that costs for 3D scanning will not be included in the fee given out as these services have a baseline cost of \$8,000. Any further items were changed for clarity and ease of implementation for City Staff.

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